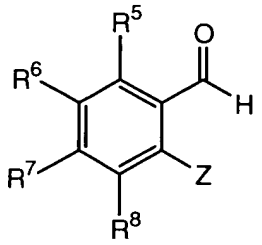
AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

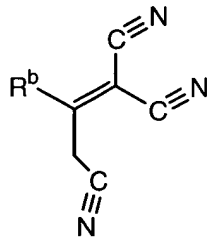
Please replace the paragraph [00013] with the following amended paragraph:

[00013] Briefly, therefore the present invention is directed to a novel method of making a tricyclic aminocyanopyridine MK-2 inhibiting compound, the method comprising:

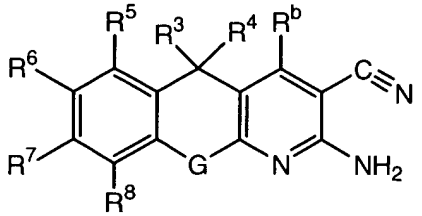
reacting a substituted benzaldehyde having the structure:



with a tricarbonitrile having the structure:



to form an aminocyanopyridine compound having the structure:



wherein:

Z is selected from the group consisting of -OH, -SH, and -NR^aY;

R^a [[R_a]] is selected from the group consisting of alkyl, aryl, and heteroaryl;

Y is a protecting group for nitrogen that is selected from the group consisting of benzyl, allyl, alkyl carbamates and benzyl carbamate;

G is selected from the group consisting of oxygen, sulfur, and nitrogen;

when G is oxygen, it has no substituent groups;

when G is sulfur, it is either unsubstituted, or is substituted with one or two oxo groups;

when G is nitrogen, it is substituted with C_1-C_4 alkyl;

R^b is selected from the group consisting of furyl and -NH-R^2;

R^2 is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, alkoxy, hydroxyalkyl, alkylaryl, arylalkyl, alkoxyaryl, aminoalkyl, alkylaminoalkyl, arylaminoalkyl, alkoxyalkyl, alkylcarboxy, and carboxyalkyl;

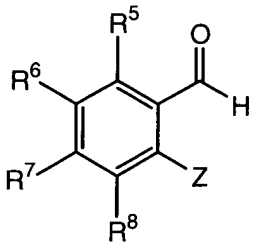
R^3 and R^4 are each independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, dicyanoalkyl, and substituted or unsubstituted heterocyclyl and cyclyl, where substituents, if any, comprise halo moieties; and

R^5, R^6, R^7 and R^8 are each independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, hydroxy, alkoxy, halo, alkyl, alkenyl, alkylyl, arylalkyl, alkylaryl, amino, alkylamino, arylamino, alkylaminoalkyl, carboxy, aminoalkoxy, alkylcarboxyalkyl, alkylamino, aminoalkyl, nitro, aryl, arylamino, alkenoxy, hydroxyalkoxy, alkoxyalkoxy, heterocyclylalkyl, heterocyclylalkoxy, carboxyalkoxy, alkylaminoalkoxy, alkylcarboxyalkoxy, pyrrolidylethoxy, hydroxyalkoxy, and alkylcarboxy, where R^6 and R^7 are such that they optionally join to form a six membered heterocyclic ring.

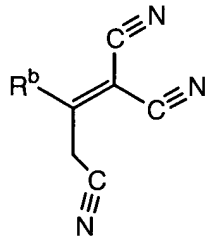
Please replace the paragraph [00014] with the following amended paragraph:

[00014] The present invention is also directed to a novel method of making a tricyclic aminocyanopyridine MK-2 inhibiting compound, the method comprising:

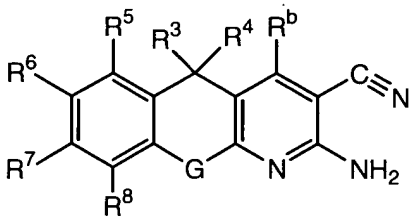
reacting a substituted benzaldehyde having the structure:



with a tricarbonitrile having the structure:



to form an aminocyanopyridine compound having the structure:



wherein:

Z is selected from the group consisting of -OH, -SH, and -NR^aY;

R^a [[R_a]] is selected from the group consisting of alkyl, aryl, and heteroaryl;

Y is a protecting group for nitrogen that is selected from the group consisting of benzyl, allyl, alkyl carbamates and benzyl carbamate;

G is selected from the group consisting of oxygen, sulfur, and nitrogen;

when G is oxygen, it has no substituent groups;

when G is sulfur, it is either unsubstituted, or is substituted with one or two oxo groups;

when G is nitrogen, it is substituted with C_1-C_4 alkyl;

R^b is selected from the group consisting of furyl and -NH-R^2;

R^2 is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, alkoxy, hydroxyalkyl, alkylaryl, arylalkyl, alkoxyaryl, aminoalkyl, alkylaminoalkyl, arylaminoalkyl, alkoxyalkyl, alkylcarboxy, and carboxyalkyl;

R^3 and R^4 are each independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, dicyanoalkyl, and substituted or unsubstituted heterocyclyl and cyclyl, where substituents, if any, comprise halo moieties; and

R^5, R^6, R^7 and R^8 are each independently selected from the group consisting of:

hydrogen, hydroxy, amino, halo, nitro,

branched or unbranched C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_2-C_6 alkenyl, C_2-C_6 alkynyl, C_1-C_6 alkoxy, hydroxy C_1-C_6 alkyl, hydroxy C_1-C_6 alkoxy, C_1-C_6 alkoxy C_1-C_6 alkoxy, C_1-C_6 alkoxy C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_2-C_6 alkenoxy,

branched or unbranched amino C_1-C_6 alkyl, diamino C_2-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 alkylamino C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 alkylamino, di-(C_1-C_6 alkyl)amino, C_1-C_4 alkoxyarylamino, C_1-C_4 alkoxyalkylamino, amino C_1-C_6 alkoxy, di-(C_1-C_4 alkylamino, C_2-C_6 alkoxy, di-(C_1-C_6 alkyl)amino C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 alkylamino C_1-C_6 alkoxy, halo C_1-C_6 alkoxy, dihalo C_1-C_6 alkoxy, trihalo C_1-C_6 alkoxy, cyano C_1-C_6 alkyl, dicyano C_1-C_6 alkyl, cyano C_1-C_6 alkoxy, dicyano C_1-C_6 alkoxy, carbamyl C_1-C_4 alkoxy, heterocyclyl C_1-C_4 alkoxy, heteroaryl C_1-C_4 alkoxy, sulfo, sulfamyl, C_1-C_4 alkylaminosulfonyl, hydroxy C_1-C_4 alkylaminosulfonyl, di-(C_1-C_4 alkyl)aminosulfonyl, C_1-C_4 alkylthio, C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonyl, C_1-C_4 alkylsulfinyl,

aryl, aryl C_1-C_6 alkyl, heterocyclyl C_1-C_6 alkyl, heteroaryl C_1-C_6 alkyl, heterocyclyl C_1-C_6 alkoxy, heteroaryl C_1-C_6 alkoxy, aryl C_1-C_6 alkoxy, where the aryl ring can be substituted or unsubstituted, and, if substituted, the substituent group is selected from one or more of the group consisting of C_1-C_6 alkyl, halo, amino, and C_1-C_6 alkoxy,

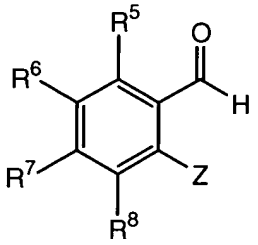
substituted or unsubstituted C_3-C_6 cyclyl, C_3-C_6 heterocyclyl, and, if substituted, the substituent group is selected from one or more of the group consisting of C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 alkoxy, halo, amino, and where the C_3-C_6 heterocyclyl ring contains O, S, or N,

branched or unbranched C_1-C_6 alkoxycarbonyl C_1-C_6 alkoxy, and

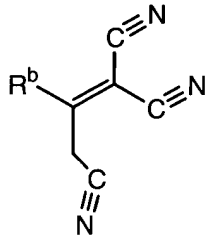
carboxy, carboxy C_1-C_6 alkoxy, carboxy C_1-C_6 alkyl, hydroxy C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl.

Please replace the paragraph [00017] with the following amended paragraph:

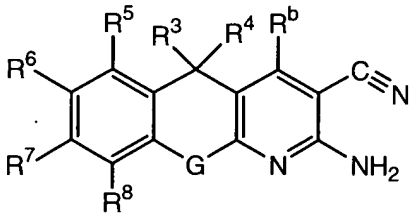
[00017] It has been discovered that these compounds can be produced by reacting a substituted benzaldehyde having the structure:



with a tricarbonitrile having the structure:



to form an aminocyanopyridine compound having the structure:



wherein:

Z is selected from the group consisting of -OH, -SH, and -NR^aY;

$\underline{R^a}$ [[R_a]] is selected from the group consisting of alkyl, aryl, and heteroaryl;

Y is a protecting group for nitrogen that is selected from the group consisting of benzyl, allyl, alkyl carbamates and benzyl carbamate;

G is selected from the group consisting of oxygen, sulfur, and nitrogen;

when G is oxygen, it has no substituent groups;

when G is sulfur, it is either unsubstituted, or is substituted with one or two oxo groups;

when G is nitrogen, it is substituted with C_1-C_4 alkyl;

R^b is selected from the group consisting of furyl and -NH-R^2;

R^2 is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, alkoxy, hydroxyalkyl, alkylaryl, arylalkyl, alkoxyaryl, aminoalkyl, alkylaminoalkyl, arylaminoalkyl, alkoxyalkyl, alkylcarboxy, and carboxyalkyl;

R^3 and R^4 are each independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, dicyanoalkyl, and substituted or unsubstituted heterocyclyl and cyclyl, where substituents, if any, comprise halo moieties; and

R^5, R^6, R^7 and R^8 are each independently selected from the group consisting of:

hydrogen, hydroxy, amino, halo, nitro,

branched or unbranched C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_2-C_6 alkenyl, C_2-C_6 alkynyl, C_1-C_6 alkoxy, hydroxy C_1-C_6 alkyl, hydroxy C_1-C_6 alkoxy, C_1-C_6 alkoxy C_1-C_6 alkoxy, C_1-C_6 alkoxy C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_2-C_6 alkenoxy,

branched or unbranched amino C_1-C_6 alkyl, diamino C_2-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 alkylamino C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 alkylamino, di-(C_1-C_6 alkyl)amino, C_1-C_4 alkoxyarylamino, C_1-C_4 alkoxyalkylamino, amino C_1-C_6 alkoxy, di-(C_1-C_4 alkylamino, C_2-C_6 alkoxy, di-(C_1-C_6 alkyl)amino C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 alkylamino C_1-C_6 alkoxy, halo C_1-C_6 alkoxy, dihalo C_1-C_6 alkoxy, trihalo C_1-C_6 alkoxy, cyano C_1-C_6 alkyl, dicyano C_1-C_6 alkyl, cyano C_1-C_6 alkoxy, dicyano C_1-C_6 alkoxy, carbamyl C_1-C_4 alkoxy, heterocyclyl C_1-C_4 alkoxy, heteroaryl C_1-C_4 alkoxy, sulfo, sulfamyl, C_1-C_4 alkylaminosulfonyl, hydroxy C_1-C_4 alkylaminosulfonyl, di-(C_1-C_4 alkyl)aminosulfonyl, C_1-C_4 alkylthio, C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonyl, C_1-C_4 alkylsulfinyl,

aryl, aryl C_1-C_6 alkyl, heterocyclyl C_1-C_6 alkyl, heteroaryl C_1-C_6 alkyl, heterocyclyl C_1-C_6 alkoxy, heteroaryl C_1-C_6 alkoxy, aryl C_1-C_6 alkoxy, where the aryl ring can be substituted or unsubstituted, and, if substituted, the substituent group is selected from one or more of the group consisting of C_1-C_6 alkyl, halo, amino, and C_1-C_6 alkoxy,

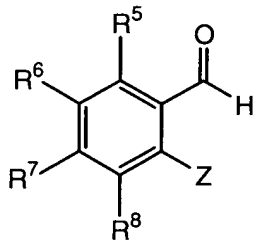
substituted or unsubstituted C_3-C_6 cyclyl, C_3-C_6 heterocyclyl, and, if substituted, the substituent group is selected from one or more of the group consisting of C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 alkoxy, halo, amino, and where the C_3-C_6 heterocyclyl ring contains O, S, or N,

branched or unbranched C_1-C_6 alkoxycarbonyl C_1-C_6 alkoxy, and

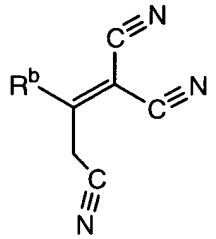
carboxy, carboxy C_1-C_6 alkoxy, carboxy C_1-C_6 alkyl, hydroxy C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl.

Please replace the paragraph [00051] with the following amended paragraph:

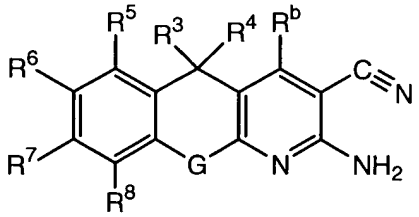
[00051] In an embodiment of this method of synthesis as described above, a tricyclic aminocyanopyridine MK-2 inhibiting compound can be prepared by reacting a substituted benzaldehyde having the structure:



with a tricarbonitrile having the structure:



to form an aminocyanopyridine compound having the structure:



wherein:

Z is selected from the group consisting of -OH, -SH, and -NR^aY;

$\underline{R^a}$ [[R_a]] is selected from the group consisting of alkyl, aryl, and heteroaryl;

Y is a protecting group for nitrogen. Examples of such nitrogen protecting groups include benzyl, allyl, alkyl carbamates and benzyl carbamates.

G is selected from the group consisting of oxygen, sulfur, and nitrogen;

when G is oxygen, it has no substituent groups;

when G is sulfur, it is either unsubstituted, or is substituted with one or two oxo groups;

when G is nitrogen, it is substituted with C_1-C_4 alkyl;

R^b is selected from the group consisting of furyl and -NH-R^2;

R^2 is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, alkoxy, hydroxyalkyl, alkylaryl, arylalkyl, alkoxyaryl, aminoalkyl, alkylaminoalkyl, arylaminoalkyl, alkoxyalkyl, alkylcarboxy, and carboxyalkyl;

R^3 and R^4 are each independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, dicyanoalkyl, and substituted or unsubstituted heterocyclyl and cyclyl, where substituents, if any, comprise halo moieties; and

R^5, R^6, R^7 and R^8 are each independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, hydroxy, alkoxy, halo, alkyl, alkenyl, alkylyl, arylalkyl, alkylaryl, amino, alkylamino, arylamino, alkylaminoalkyl, carboxy, aminoalkoxy, alkylcarboxyalkyl, alkylamino, aminoalkyl, nitro, aryl, arylamino, alkenoxy, hydroxyalkoxy, alkoxyalkoxy, heterocyclylalkyl, heterocyclylalkoxy, carboxyalkoxy, alkylaminoalkoxy, alkylcarboxyalkoxy, pyrrolidylethoxy, hydroxyalkoxy, and alkylcarboxy, where R^6 and R^7 are such that they optionally join to form a six membered heterocyclic ring.

Please replace the paragraph [00054] with the following amended paragraph:

[00054] In an embodiment of the present method,

Z is selected from the group consisting of -OH, -SH, and -NR^aY;

$\underline{R^a}$ [[R_a]] is selected from the group consisting of alkyl, aryl, and heteroaryl;

Y is a protecting group for nitrogen that is selected from the group consisting of benzyl, allyl, alkyl carbamates and benzyl carbamate;

G is selected from the group consisting of oxygen, sulfur, and nitrogen;

when G is oxygen, it has no substituent groups;

when G is sulfur, it is either unsubstituted, or is substituted with one or two oxo groups;

when G is nitrogen, it is substituted with C_1-C_4 alkyl;

R^b is selected from the group consisting of furyl and -NH-R^2;

R^2 is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, alkoxy, hydroxyalkyl, alkylaryl, arylalkyl, alkoxyaryl, aminoalkyl, alkylaminoalkyl, arylaminoalkyl, alkoxyalkyl, alkylcarboxy, and carboxyalkyl;

R^3 and R^4 are each independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, dicyanoalkyl, and substituted or unsubstituted heterocyclyl and cyclyl, where substituents, if any, comprise halo moieties; and

R^5, R^6, R^7 and R^8 are each independently selected from the group consisting of:

hydrogen, hydroxy, amino, halo, nitro,

branched or unbranched C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_2-C_6 alkenyl, C_2-C_6 alkynyl, C_1-C_6 alkoxy, hydroxy C_1-C_6 alkyl, hydroxy C_1-C_6 alkoxy, C_1-C_6 alkoxy C_1-C_6 alkoxy, C_1-C_6 alkoxy C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_2-C_6 alkenoxy,

branched or unbranched amino C_1-C_6 alkyl, diamino C_2-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 alkylamino C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 alkylamino, di-(C_1-C_6 alkyl)amino, C_1-C_4 alkoxyarylamino, C_1-C_4 alkoxyalkylamino, amino C_1-C_6 alkoxy, di-(C_1-C_4 alkylamino, C_2-C_6 alkoxy, di-(C_1-C_6 alkyl)amino C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 alkylamino C_1-C_6 alkoxy, halo C_1-C_6 alkoxy, dihalo C_1-C_6 alkoxy, trihalo C_1-C_6 alkoxy, cyano C_1-C_6 alkyl, dicyano C_1-C_6 alkyl, cyano C_1-C_6 alkoxy, dicyano C_1-C_6 alkoxy, carbamyl C_1-C_4 alkoxy, heterocyclyl C_1-C_4 alkoxy, heteroaryl C_1-C_4 alkoxy, sulfo, sulfamyl, C_1-C_4 alkylaminosulfonyl, hydroxy C_1-C_4 alkylaminosulfonyl, di-(C_1-C_4 alkyl)aminosulfonyl, C_1-C_4 alkylthio, C_1-C_4 alkylsulfonyl, C_1-C_4 alkylsulfinyl,

aryl, aryl C_1-C_6 alkyl, heterocyclyl C_1-C_6 alkyl, heteroaryl C_1-C_6 alkyl, heterocyclyl C_1-C_6 alkoxy, heteroaryl C_1-C_6 alkoxy, aryl C_1-C_6 alkoxy, where the aryl ring can be substituted or unsubstituted, and, if substituted, the substituent group is selected from one or more of the group consisting of C_1-C_6 alkyl, halo, amino, and C_1-C_6 alkoxy,

substituted or unsubstituted C_3-C_6 cyclyl, C_3-C_6 heterocyclyl, and, if substituted, the substituent group is selected from one or more of the group consisting of C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 alkoxy, halo, amino, and where the C_3-C_6 heterocyclyl ring contains O, S, or N,

branched or unbranched C_1-C_6 alkoxycarbonyl C_1-C_6 alkoxy, and

carboxy, carboxy C_1-C_6 alkoxy, carboxy C_1-C_6 alkyl, hydroxy C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl, C_1-C_4 alkoxycarbonyl.